



Democracy and You- An innovative approach to Civic and voter education

The main objective of this programme is to deepen democracy in South Africa through civic education with a particular focus on citizenship, democracy and human rights education within communities of KwaZulu-Natal.

- Inform communities about democratic processes and their rights and responsibilities within the Constitutional framework;
- Educate communities about democratic institutions, the role and functions of parliament, provincial legislatures; provincial and local government structures;
- Motivate people to become active citizens and engage in the policy, law making and community development processes;
- Prepare people to assume positions of community and political leadership;
- Encourage them lobby government structures to address their needs, and
- Familiarise communities with their elected representatives and assist them in holding these representatives accountable.

For the purposes of this programme, the print media that have been identified include

- An educational cartoon booklet
- An A3 foldable brochure
- Various Pamphlets
- A2 Posters

The print media uses cartooning as a medium for delivering appropriate messages. This format has been selected as an alternative to the usual academic material typically used in workshop or classroom type settings. Cartooning as a medium was selected because cartoon narratives provide a dynamic and fresh approach, designed to draw the reader into the text. The narratives are designed to be open-ended, and require the active participation of the reader to achieve closure.

The methodology is based on cartoon narratives that have the following characteristics:

- The characters created are typical, credible and consistent.
- The dialogues respond to real life problems.
- The content of the dialogues is derived from a participatory action research process whereby participants act out role plays in which the content is generated.
- The problems and issues discussed are derived from anecdotal reportage (real life story-telling).

The application of these techniques ensure that:

- The dialogues between characters exemplify real-life dialogues.
- They function effectively as triggers or discussion starters for discussion groups.
- They bring buried or taboo issues to the fore.
- They use humour to release tensions.
- They introduce hard-to-talk-about topics into everyday conversation.